

Spectrum



Photo by Siobhan Carlile

Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Foley, U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon commanding general, and Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Clark, U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon command sergeant major are joined by the youngest officer on post, 2nd Lt. Shaniece Atkinson, 442nd Signal Battalion, and the youngest Soldier, Pvt. Dakota Bowden, 15th Regimental Signal Brigade, in cutting birthday cake June 11 in Conrad Hall.

Happy 233rd birthday Army celebrates

Bonnie Heater
Signal staff

Some people view birthdays as just another day. For others they would soon forget about birthdays entirely. Not so for the U.S. Army.

In the United States and around the world Soldiers, their Families, the Department of the Army civilians and contract employees took time to honor this special event. The U.S. Army turned 233 years old June 14.

The official observance of the Army's birthday at Fort Gordon kicked off June 11 at Conrad Hall. Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Foley, U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon commanding general, and Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Clark, U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon command sergeant major were joined by the youngest officer on post, 2nd Lt. Shaniece Atkinson, 442nd Signal Battalion, and the youngest Soldier, Pvt. Dakota Bowden, 15th Regimental Signal Brigade, in cutting the birthday cake. The birthday was also celebrated throughout the post by Child and Youth Services.

At Fort Gordon the Child Development Center, Family Child Care, School Age Services, Middle School and Teens programs integrated the history of the Army and the messages in the "Happy Birthday U.S. Army" storybook into their daily programs.

As part of a Secretary of the Army-directed initiative to include Army children in the service's 233rd birthday celebration, Army Morale, Welfare and Recreation

Command's Child Youth Services developed a new book titled "Happy Birthday U.S. Army!"

The book is less than 25 pages and is packed full of pictures, graphics and Army history. It involves a young boy discussing the birthday of his grandfather and the similarities between his immediate Family and the larger Army Family of which he is also a part.

The book was co-written by Donna McGrath and Mary Ellen Pratt, both with Army Youth Services. They wanted to impart an understanding of Army history, the importance of military parents' service to the country, and the children's important place within the Army family, according to McGrath.

The book was read by Capt. Jason Cody, 63rd Expeditionary Signal Battalion Rear detachment commander, to children age 6 weeks to 6 years old June 13 at the Child Development Center.

"It was great to tell them what their moms and dads are doing in the Army and to help them understand they are part of the Army Family," said Cody.

All week long students wrote essays and poems, worked with arts and crafts projects and expressed their feelings about Army Strong and what Army life means to them, according to Mary Crowder, chief of Child and Youth Services at Fort Gordon.

"They learned about Army history and what the Army was like 233 years ago and how it has evolved to where it is today," she said.

Children at the post's Child

and Youth Services Center, celebrated with Jodie calls June 12. They marched into the Center's gymnasium shouting, "Sound off! 1-2. Sound off! 3-4. Sound off! 1-2-3-4. I don't know, but I have been told the U.S. Army is very old. Sound off! 1-2. I have been told the Army's 233 years old. Sound off! 1-2.

After the the pledge of Allegiance, Jasmine Greenhow and Kierra McKnight read their essays, "Why I am happy to be an Army strong youth." Then Command Sgt. Maj. Arthur Washington, the garrison command sergeant major, talked briefly about the Army's history. He explained how military equipment, uniforms, and forms of military communications have involved.

Washington also spoke about how Soldiers and Department of the Army civilians help take care of military children and their Families when the Soldiers are deployed. After the cake-cutting ceremony, everyone went outside and watched as the children released 233 red, white and blue balloons into the sky. "Today's event was a wonderful experience for our children," said Crowder. We had poems and essays read that came personally from their hearts. The releasing of the balloons expressed our patriotism to the Army.

On Saturday, June 14, teens gathered at the post indoor pool from noon to 4 p.m. for the celebratory pool party. This was our teen's opportunity to reach to friends who may not know the Army Story and share their personal experiences, said Kathleen Duncan, Child and Youth Services Outreach Services director.



Photos by Bonnie Heater

Kierra McKnight, age 12, waits with the rest of the children at the Fort Gordon Youth Services Center June 12 to release 233 balloons to celebrate the Army's 233rd Birthday. McKnight, who said she hopes to grow up and compete in the Olympics track and field, read her essay, "Why I am happy to be an Army strong youth" during the Center's Army birthday celebration.



(Above left to right) Azariah Perkins, age 5; Drake Mayer, age 6; Brandon Armour, age 3; and Xander Malone, age 4, help Capt. Jason Cody, Rear Detachment commander for the 63rd Expeditionary Signal Battalion, cut the cake at the Fort Gordon Child Development Center. (Right) Sidney Baxter, age 6, enjoys some cake.



Capt. Jason Cody, 63rd Expeditionary Signal Battalion Rear Detachment commander, reads the "Happy Birthday Army" story to children at the Fort Gordon Child Development Center.



Jasmine Greenhow (left) and Kierra McKnight help Command Sgt. Maj. Arthur Washington, the command sergeant major for the garrison, cut the birthday cake at the Fort Gordon Youth Services Center.